

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

-----131004Z 026732 /15

R 130709Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0394

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 0620

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS:PINT, YE

SUBJ: ELECTIONS IN YEMEN

REF: 76 SANA 3779

SUMMARY: ELECTIONS MAY BE HELD LATER IN 1977.

1. ACCORDING TO AL THWRAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER, SOMETHING CALLED THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE GENERAL POPULAR CONFERENCE ("AL MUATAMR ASH-SHA'BI AL-AM") HELD ITS FIRST MEETING IN HODEIDA ON 10 FEBRUARY UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF YAR PRESIDENT HAMD I INITIALLY AND QADI AL HAJRI SUBSEQUENTLY. AMONG HAJRI'S VARIOUS TITLES IS ONE WHICH MAKES HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR ELECTIONS.

2. ACCORDING TO AHMED ABDO SA'ID ON 10 FEBRUARY THIS IS FIRST OF SERIES OF MEETINGS WHICH WILL LEAD TO ELECTIONS OF A CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL WITHIN 1977. THE MEETINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO BRING TOGETHER MEMBERS OF THE REFORM COMMITTEES AND COOPERATIVES WHICH HAVE BEEN PROMOTED OVER THE PAST YEAR, AND INCLUDE AS WELL OTHER GROUPS LIKE MEMBERS OF
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THE ULAMA (RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS) AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE LOCAL MEETINGS WILL CULMINATE WITH A BIG JAMBOREE OF "SOME 5,000 PEOPLE TO APPROVE A BLUEPRINT FOR POLITICAL EVOLUTION."

3. ACCORDING TO SA'ID, PRESIDENT IS LAUNCHING THIS EFFORT IN ORDER TO CAPITALIZE ON VERY REAL

SUPPORT WHICH HAS COME OUT FOR HIM IN PAST YEAR IN ALL SECTIONS AND CLASSES. MOVE WILL OFFSET CRITICISM OF RIVALS LIKE AL-AHMAR, WHO, AFTER HIS TELEVISED RECONICLLIATION WITH HAMDI, WAS PAINFULLY SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THAT THE YAR PRESIDENT DID NOT INTEND TO ACCEDE TO ANY OF HIS SPECIAL DESIRES, LIKE ABROGATION F MARTIAL LAW, RESTORATION OF CONSTITUTION, EARLY ELECTIONS UNDER THE OLD ELECTORAL LAW AND A JOB FOR HIM PERSONALLY PLUS A PURGE OF THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS. AHMAR HAS RETIRED IN DISCONTENT BACK UPCONTRY.

COMMENT: HAMDI DOES HAVE POPULAR SUPPORT WHICH CAN BE SEEN WHENEVER HE GOES ON TRIPS TO OPEN PROJECTS. ENTHUSIASM IS REAL AND WIDESPREAD IN CROWDS WHICH GATHER TO MEET HIM. HOWEVER, HE ALSO HAS CRITICS, LIKE AHMAR, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS WHICH LACK GOVERNMENT SERVICES, AND HE HAS NO MECHANISM TO TURN THE ENTHUSIASM OF HIS SUPPORTERS AGAINST THE COMPLAINTS OF HIS CRITICS. ELECTIONS -- WHICH HAVE REGULARLY BEEN PREDICTED (SEE OCTOBER 1976 REFTTEL) IN WHICH EXCELLENT SOURCE PREDICTED THEM FOR LAST MONTH)-- ARE GOING TO BE DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT FOR BOTH PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL PURPOSES. THEY CLEARLY FASCINATE HAMDI, HOWEVER, HE WANTS CONSTITUTIONAL TRAPPINGS AND A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION THAT REACHES BEYOND ARMY AND GOVERNMENT. WE ARE GUESSING, THEREFORE, BUT WE THINK THAT FORMAL EFFORTS HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED TOWARD CREATING A GOVERNMENT

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PARTY AND THAT ELECTIONS--ALONG WITH THE AL-MUATAMR ASH-SHA'BI--WILL BE A MAJOR GOVERNMENT EFFORT IN 1977.

SCOTES

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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